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CHRISTMAS NUMBER

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THE SAVIOUR'S WORK

The babe in Bethlem's manger laid
In humble form so low;
By wondering angels is surveyed
Through all his scenes of woe.

A Saviour! sinners all around
Sing, shout the wondrous word;
Let every bosom hail the sound,
A Saviour! Christ the Lord.

For not to sit on David's throne
With worldly pomp and joy,
He came on earth for sin to atone,
And Satan to destroy.

To preach the word of life divine,
And feed with living bread,
To heal the sick with hand benign
And raise to life the dead.

He preached, he suffered, bled and died
Uplift, 'twixt earth and skies;
In sinners' stead was crucified,
For sin a sacrifice.

Well may we sing a Saviour's birth,
Who need the grace so given,
And hail his coming down to earth,
Who raises us to Heaven.

— from *A Good Christmas Box. 1847*

GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS OR ANY DAY

MARGUERITE ELDREDGE

(*A Tribute to White Cross Workers*)

IT was all so new to the newest missionary away back in 1926—the beauty of the southern cross, the silvery sheen as moonlight played on the majestic cocoanut palms' branches, the heat at noontide, the unintelligible babble of natives' voices. And then a senior missionary said, "It's now the first week in December. Everybody is getting ready for Christmas. You do not know the language so you can't help with the programs, but take this cloth, cut out and make shirts and pants for those fifteen little tikes who clean the mission paths.

Christmas in Congo! Sewing pants! Preparing presents! Whatever did these things have to do with being a missionary in Central Africa? Christmas—well, of course it does commemorate the birth of God's greatest Missionary, His Son sent to a lost world. Gifts? for a houseboy and 36 school girls! Then the senior missionary said, "Today we shall look over the White Cross supplies and see what we can find for gifts."

White Cross—the *must do* of missionary societies in America! Sometimes the quota would be too small, sometimes too large. Maybe it was for Congo when warmer affections or personal ties lay with China, but the White Cross chairman and her able helpers by many ingenious methods rallied and invariably filled the required quotas, often adding a few surprises to meet needs or produce smiles on some mission field a year or more later. Blessed rearward, always standing by, always getting the stuff out to those on the firing line.

On that afternoon two score years ago I saw White Cross not as a quota, but as an answer to the problem of Christmas presents, a harbinger of glad tidings and great joy to Congo folk of all ages. During the intervening years, years of peace and of war, White Cross gifts have enabled staffs full or sadly decimated to carry on a daily and truly Christ-like ministry. The newborn have been clothed and mothers instructed in matters of care and cleanliness

greatly reducing infant mortality in many areas. School pupils have been clothed. Christian leaders have received instruction with aids which have helped to turn their little huts into model homes. People with sores, ulcers and burns have benefited by sterile dressings, clean and adequate bandages. Success has crowned the doctors' skill in surgery and the post-operative care by white and native nurses as a result of the provision of surgical gloves, gowns, masks, dressings, sheets, towels and other accessories. Those who mourn have been comforted when the loved one has been wrapped in a sheet before being laid to rest in the graveyard.

Many of us have seen little black girls cuddling and nursing a stick of firewood, and the wee lads running down the village paths with their "bicycles"—two green limes pinioned at the end of a forked stick. Exuberant joy or wordless questioning wonder express the deep felt satisfaction in wee hearts as arms clutch possessively for the first time a real doll, a toy car, ball, scrapbook or trinket. And to begin or round out a term of school, White Cross gifts have come so often, just in time, with paper, notebooks pens and pencils.

This year marks my first Christmas of a new term and at a station new to me, but it is one of the happiest I have experienced in Africa. In October local schools began to practice Christmas songs, and rehearsals for a pageant were undertaken by a group representing several tribes and most departments of mission work. Lists were compiled of those on the mission station and in the district to whom gifts should be given. Then followed the inventory and counting of available White Cross supplies. After the last revision of supplies and persons gifts were wrapped in newspaper, tagged, and fastened with pins. To pastors, nurses and monitors, a sheet was given for the family, a second-hand tie for the father, a handkerchief for the mother and one small dress or shirt for one of the children. Used ties were given to teacher-evangelists serving in the district, dresses for the women leaders serving on the station. And remnants of cloth were whirled through the sewing machine to turn out head-kerchiefs and school bags for school girls and

boys. Little suits were found for the orphans, bath towels for the houseboys. Remnants of cloth and oft-used costumes helped to clothe the cast for the pageant, in Oriental style, and their message—Bible passages and Christmas songs—directed the thoughts of all to God's great love and provision for a lost world in the gift of His Son, our Saviour.

Monday a table was ladened with a miscellaneous assortment of White Cross gifts, toys, trinkets, bags, mirrors and face cloths. As the races were run, and the sports completed, the winners came to the table to select a prize. Most popular were the mirrors and facecloths, and happy indeed were the boys and girls as they walked away to display their trophies to admiring throngs.

Much planning and perspiration preceded the bell on Tuesday afternoon calling over 600 pupils, workmen and their families, and hospital patients to a hymn of praise, prayer and fellowship at a feast of pig, goat, cassava, peanuts, pumpkin seed and pineapples. The following day our pupils went home for the Christmas recess.

Now Christmas is over, another year draws to a close. Looking back blessings are too many to number. Looking ahead the possibilities of what God can do for us, with us and through us if we are fully yielded to Him stagger our finite minds. But we pause to thank all White Cross workers for their hours of toil and gifts of love. We thank them on behalf of folk all round the world helped by them, on behalf of the souls who see in their selfless service something of God's love and Christ-likeness constraining them thereby to desire Him, the Christ of Christmas, the Christ of Calvary, God's great free Gift available any day. Yes to-day and for always Christ may be ours. Let us step out on His promises, that He may step into the control chamber of our hearts and lives.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

MAT. 2:1,2.

A CHURCH POST

W. F. ROBBINS

IT was Sunday morning. We had traveled thirty miles to the out post at which we were to have a meeting. As we stood there in the bright morning sunlight our hearts were filled with peace and pleasure and thankfulness that we were the Lord's and that He had chosen us to do His great work. The morning breezes fanned and cooled our faces. The fragrance of a blossoming woodland tree was carried like a sweet blessing to us. Down the wide avenue ahead graceful palm branches waved gently, beautifying the blue of the skies with their sturdy green foliage.

On one side of the bare common stood the pastor's house. It was small and built of mud and thatch. It would not have satisfied an American pastor. With its small door, its tiny windows and its poorly furnished interior, it would not have been adequate for anyone accustomed to our American standard of living. This pastor was not exactly satisfied, but the wide smile with which he emerged from his litttle hut showed that he was not unhappy.

A little distance beyond here stood the remains of what had been a mud and grass church. A few of the posts which had once held the grass roof were still standing. The elevated dirt floor remained almost as good as it had been with a roof over it. As one looked at this spot one could not help but feel a tinge of sadness. What can be more pitiful to a thoughtful christian than the sight of a ruined church when that ruin is the emblem of what has happened in the hearts of people.

But on this particular morning there was a contradiction in the scene. Yes, there was the fallen ruined church and it was a symbol of what had happened in the hearts of the people in that area. But on this particular morning there seemed to be an atmosphere of awakening. Hundreds of people were present. For many months this place had not witnessed the presence of so many. There was hope and joy in the air. For months these people had been neglected. No pastor had graced their village homes with his presence. No evangelist had brought the word of life to darkened hungry hearts. But now a new pastor had come. In the few weeks

since his arrival he had worked with untiring energy to try to awaken the love of Christ in the hearts of those who had slumbered and become cold to the Gospel message. And this morning there was the glad fellowship of those who felt akin in faith and love.

Many boys and girls crowded together in clusters like grapes. Others darted back and forth through the crowds playing tag and reminding one of a school of tiny playful fish. Everywhere there was movement and smiles and shouts and laughter.

The pastor gave the signal for the bell to be rung. Immediately the crowds moved in one direction. Yonder near some palm trees, a huge palm-branch tabernacle has been constructed. It is very temporary indeed, for in a few days the palm-leaf walls and the roof will be dried and will not give shelter even from the sun. The crowds poured into this space in an almost endless confusion. Logs laid on the ground were the only seats. Men crowded to one side of the space while women and children jostled into the other side. A rude bamboo pulpit stood ready to receive the Bible and hymnbook of the preacher. As the missionary and the pastor entered from the back of the pulpit, they saw a great, curious, smiling crowd of murmuring people. How could one preach to such a crowd? But at the first word spoken there was silence. This was the meeting for the hearing of the testimonies of the candidates for baptism and for the voting of them into church membership. Only the church members had the right to vote, but it helps many unbelievers to hear the testimony of these new members in Christ who have so recently come out of heathenism and have repudiated the old way of fetishism and witchcraft.

There were five new Christians. Two young men, two young women and one older woman. All the testimonies vibrate with a living faith. What a thrill comes to the missionary when it is his privilege to hear the new souls in Christ give forth a fearless Christian testimony! The testimony of the older woman was the most remarkable of all. She told of her love for Christ. Her husband was a heathen. "Pray for him," she pleaded. I have long been working with him and pleading that he leave his festishes and come to Christ. Again and again she urged, "Pray for him." Long after the service was over, many of us seemed to hear her

passionate plea to us, "Pray for him." We *are* praying and surely the Holy Spirit is working and striving with the man to surrender his life to Christ. I believe that when the day of his surrender comes, this little dark-skinned woman with a heart of gold will be gloriously happy. She wants her husband to be saved.

When the testimonies were finished, the candidates were asked to leave while the church members voted on their being received into church membership. The voting took little time and the candidates were received. Then began the pilgrimage to the baptismal pool. One by one, the new Christians entered the baptismal waters.

Baptism over, the greatest and grandest service of the day was begun. The missionary was very highly honored with the choicest parts of this service. He is recognized as the man of God. However much, some of the people may have been disappointed in him on other days, on this day they honored him and they sat in anticipation and reverence to hear the message which God had given him.

The communion service was the finest and the climactic part of the whole service. Non-church members leave after the preaching service. Only the Christians remain within this most sacred fellowship with the Lord. Although the missionary has been thrilled by the crowds, thrilled by the enthusiasm, thrilled by the baptism and the testimony and church service, it is here that he becomes one with the Saviour and with the people. The missionary broke the bread and the young pastor at his side gave the wine. Both have had a part in this most blessed service. Here is one place where racial barriers do not exist. It seems to the missionary that all here are really and actually in the whole will of the Saviour "This do in remembrance of me . . . until I come."

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. MAT. 1:23

CONGO'S CRUSADE FOR CHRIST THROUGH EVANGELISM

EDWIN BOONE

FOLLOWING the World Mission Crusade in the Northern Baptist Convention the present program known as "The Crusade for Christ Through Evangelism" was inaugurated in May of 1947. This phase of the work is not new as evangelism has been an important phase of our work both at home and abroad since the Convention was first organized. But it is designed to give a new emphasis to the work. Usually when we think of Evangelism we think too often of winning people to Christ. True this is evangelism, but only the starting of it. We must train, enlist and hold the new converts. This is a program whereby pastors, missionaries and people can work together in a great cause.

Since the main part of our mission work—whether the work be that of evangelism, school or medicine—is evangelistic, the Congo mission field has entered into the program as being carried out at home. Naturally there will have to be some adaptations for the field.

The Reference Committee at its recent meeting voted to ask the Leopoldville staff to release the writer for a period of time to visit each station in the interest of the Crusade. Beginning the last part of this calendar year and on into the new year, visits will be made to each station when a week will be spent with the missionaries and native leaders chosen by the missionaries. During this time the natives will be instructed in the art of personal soul winning which means that not only missionaries and pastors can win souls. Deacons, laymen and women can and should share in this important service for the Master.

For such a type of work there must be preparation . . . . . Prayer is always vital in any preparation. Then, in order to really work this program, one must have a list of prospects which will include lost people, non-resident church members, and those whom we term 'back-sliders' or those who for some reason seem to have no interest in the work of the church now. This informa-

tion should be put on cards for the individuals, and the cards given to the visitors.

In the time of the Crusade itself on each station three things should be done. First, a daily meeting of all the visitors for at least four days. The instruction classes will deal with one of the following subjects in each class: "The Why and How of Home Visitation Evangelism", "How to Win People to Christ", "How to Deal with the Whole Family", "Meeting Excuses" and "Conserving the Results of Evangelism". Secondly, there will be the actual visitation in the homes of the prospects. The third step in the week's work is to make plans for conserving the results of the Crusade.

The director will try to work out with the missionaries on each station and with the native leaders a plan whereby the program can be carried on week by week. There are several things which can be done in order to keep the program moving. Those whom we win must be kept busy in the work of the Lord and His church. Those who have moved away without church letters, and those who are leaving the rural areas for the larger cities, must be provided for.

One can see that the Crusade for Christ through Evangelism is not something which will last for a week, or a year. It is only the beginning of a definite work which can and must be carried on until He returns to take His own to be with Him in Glory.

And, lo, the angel of the the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the Angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

LUKE 2: 9-11

CHRISTMAS AT KIMPESE

RUTH ERICKSON

A picture of Kimpese at Christmas Time" is what I am to attempt to portray for Congo News Letter readers. I'm wondering if a Moving Picture would not be more helpful, for Christmas is not confined to one scene nor to one day here. And I'm sure it would have to be a "talkie" for our Christmas is really *heard* more than *seen.*

The Christmas spirit begins to make itself felt as early as October. Then, from church and school, one hears carols, anthems, hymns—some old, some new—ringing out in children's voices, or sung more softly by the women, or triumphantly by the student body. The days are unbearably hot; red and purple bougainvillae blossoms riot amid waving palms; loaded mango trees add the scent of ripe fruit to the heavy perfume of frangi-pani flowers. The sun beats down fiercely; the grass-cutters sweat profusely as they labor but some of them smile and hum "We three kings of the Orient are" to keep time with the group singing in school. In drawing classes, stars and Christmas pictures slip in between regular lessons. As November draws to a close, pageant practice begins. December sees examinations for a week but then—every one looks forward to a short vacation period to celebrate Christmas.

And then—Christmas Eve! That's the time for the annual pageant. Since the E.P.I. community has passed the 600 mark the church is too small and the football field has become the favored place for it. There we need no "stage scenery." We have the Bangu Mts. on one side; surrounding the field are trees. Sometimes we have the pageant just at sun-down, when there is a blaze of scarlet and golden glory in the west painting the mountains with bright colors and blue shadows. Sometimes we continue until the full tropical moon bathes the whole scene in silver mists. But no matter how minor details differ, the real Christmas joy always attends the Bethlehem scenes: the star, the shepherds, the wise men, the angels. And no matter how many times we have

heard it, we all still thrill to the joyous message of the glad tidings of the birth of the Saviour of the World. We often have visitors for the pageant. Natives from quite a distance come to see it—many to spend the night and attend the morning worship also. We represent three missions (S.M.F., B.M.S. A.B.F.M.S.) and four nationalities (Swedish, English and Welsh, Canadian and American, and Swiss. Our students come from many tribes. Quite a number have several difficult months before they learn the language well enough to really converse with the others. But at Christmas we all really live our motto "All one in Christ Jesus." Each one feels that he is celebrating the birth of his own Saviour, and a real *oneness* exists in the Christmas joy.

Christmas eve when the pageant is over and the students are gathered in their own little groups — is usually the time for a "white" celebration. Each "white house" has its own "Christmas Tree" (?) and decorations. Ingenuity produces unique trees for those who boast no real potted fir tree nor even an artificial one. But the *Jul-Tomt* (the Swedish Santa Claus) has a custom of appearing in person after supper that night. He distributes gifts to all present. Sometimes we all join hands and dance around the tree singing Swedish Christmas songs to the delight of the children.

But then comes — Christmas Morning ! Some of us must be up early — and "early" means before 4:00 A.M. We observe the beautiful old custom of an early worship service in the candlelighted church. There are more than 80 candles in the six candelabra besides all the ones used in the front of the church, in the window sills, on organ, pulpit, etc. We usually try to make the church beautiful with evergreen and palm branches, flowers, stars and tinsel. Some one has to put in the finishing touches — roses, etc,— and light the candles: and ring the bell, long and loud, at 4:14 A.M.

If only you had your television screens to see the people coming in the early morning darkness! Down from the student villages and over the bridges across the ravine they come — fathers, mothers, children: lanterns bobbing up and down. Up towards the church from the workmen's village comes another crowd with

more lanterns swaying. Sometimes different groups sing carols as they come. Overhead a tropical sky is lit with lustrous stars, among them the Southern Cross. Ahead the lighted church is a-glow and the organ already pealing out "O Come All ye Faithful". Sleepy eyes widen with wonder at all the lights. The service begins. Black and white, old and young take part. Some songs are old, some are new. But the sermon, no matter how new the preacher, always conveys the sweet old story "For unto you is born this day a Saviour." By the time the last hymn is sung, the outside darkness has begun to fade and, as we emerge from the service, the light of a new day is flooding the scene. Birds are calling to one another. The breeze sways the graceful palms. Christmas Day will be bright and warm.

Most of the worshippers hasten home. In some cases, babies were left asleep with other children too tiny to wake up. The American children want to hurry home to see if Santa Claus found his way to Congo. (Most surprisingly, he always does!) The rest of the day is a holiday. Practically every house has some decoration to show joy: palm branches, flowers, paper stars, Christmas cards given out in various classes, etc. Quite often students and their families from the same station eat their Christmas meal together. The white folks usually have their real Christmas supper together on Christmas night.

But the afternoon service might be the one which you readers would like to call the "mission service." It's usually rather informal. It always begins with a Christmas hymn, Scripture reading and prayer. It sometimes takes the form of a concert. But not a practiced concert where only trained voices may produce a studied effect. Everyone is encouraged to contribute. The result is sometimes surprising. Of course one expects groups of men students to sing some of the carols in their own language. Oft-times we hear seven or eight different languages. It is pleasing when a father stands up with four of his children and they sing a hymn in four parts. It is surprising, when three women are willing to stand before the congregation and sing together, for even yet Congo women are a little hesitant at taking part in public services. But, to us, it is most significant when a husband and wife stand before

us and sing in their own language. They have come here to be trained together to go back to serve the Lord together. Yet, too often, we find a strong tendency for the men to congregate together and the women to stay in their own group as has always been Congo custom. But E.P.I. training aims to make the women, not only able, but willing to share the husband's work and responsibilit as teacher or preacher. So, to see them enjoy doing it, rejoices our hearts. Of course on Christmas Day, everyone's thoughts go back "home" more than at any other time. We hear, amongst the students, many references to their folks and villages. We think it helps them to feel a little less lonely if they can sing the old carols in their own tongue. One year we asked that everyone present sing the last carol in his own language. Perhaps the result was "a joyful noise unto the Lord" but even if there were a few tears glistening in eyes, there were smiling lips, too, and I'm sure that all hearts glowed and the Christmas message "Joy to the World" prevailed.

In many of the prayers that are heard through-out the Christmas season, very special mention is made — and prayers offered for all those who have helped in any way to make it possible for the Christmas message to reach Congo.

So — if we could turn on a Congo television scene the dancing black eyes, the smiling lips, the sweet little black babies in their pink and blue and white flannels from White Cross — the lighted candles, the decorative palm branches — the melodious Christmas Carols — would all be the background for the bowing Congolese who clap their hands together and say, "Matondo meto kwa bena babo" (Our thanks to you all.)

I know their glowing hearts want to send a real "thank you" to you all:

to you who give your money;
to you who pray for them:
and to many of you who have been out here and worked among them.

I'm sure they would say "You have helped to push away the jungle darkness of sin from Congo hearts so that the light of the Bethlehem star might shine in. Now may the joy that attended the angel's message on that first Christmas be in your hearts and ours as we worship, together, the Christ-child in His manger."

A BAPTISMAL SERVICE

MARGUERITE ELDREDGE

THERE is no sweeter sound in heaven than from the lips of youth, the middle-aged and those older as they announce to God, "Thank you Father for your Christmas gift, your Son is now my Saviour, He lives in my heart and I now live and move and have my being in Him." And during the past twelve months a great host in the Moanza field has swelled the heavenly anthems of praise over sinners saved and in Christ made co-heirs with Him of all the riches of God's Kingdom.

Our little stone church was crowded the beautiful Sunday morning of November 30th. One hundred and eighteen followers filed by the pastor and missionary in charge to declare a new name, a Biblical name, self chosen by which as baptized believers they would henceforth be known. Then these and a throng of witnesses marched about a mile to the stream. Across a plain at this altitude of 1800 feet there is a marvelous panoramic view of distant hills and valleys, heavily wooded, clothed in rich shades of brown, green and enhanced by lights and shadows of early morning sunshine. The end of the trail led into the woods and down, down, until we heard the roar of rushing water, then through a parting in the trees could view the Kinongi river as it tumbled snow-white over small natural falls into a pool with breadth and depth sufficient to permit three pastors to baptize simultaneously three candidates. Rarely have I seen a more beautiful setting for a baptismal service. Two wooded knolls on opposite sides of the stream were crowded with witnesses who sang the great hymns of faith and of the cleansing tides flowing from our Saviour's pierced side. In between is another hill, cleared, on which stood the candidates and from which they descended three at a time to be received and baptized by three white-robed pastors in that pool fed by the falls and renewed continuously by the swift current roaring noisily on its way through the impenetrable jungle. Tree-tops gently swayed and parted by the wind enabled the sunlight to fall as heaven's benediction upon this sacred service. My heart was filled with

praise and gratitude for those who in other days had sowed the good seed of God's Word in the hearts of my boarding school pupils so that today 22 girls and 35 boys were numbered among those baptized.

Following the preaching and communion services, as the throngs poured from the church the hand-shaking and rejoicing as old and new Christians mingled was indeed thrilling. That afternoon fathers and mothers sat with their families in a service of dedication for 45 babies. Great impetus is thus given to the process of transforming hut-life filled with superstition and fears, to homes where Christ binds hearts in ties of love, fellowship and service.

Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth!
O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth!
For this is the birthday of Jesus our King.
Who brought us salvation—his praises we'll sing!

A heavenly vision appeared in the sky;
Vast numbers of angels the Shepherds did spy,
Proclaiming the birthday of Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation—his praises we'll sing!

Likewise a bright star in the sky did appear,
Which led the Wise Men from the east to draw near;
They found the Messiah, sweet Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation—his praises we'll sing!

And when they were come, they their treasures unfold,
And unto him offered myrrh, incense, and gold.
So blessed for ever be Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation—his praises we'll sing!

—A Gallery Carol

FROM A FAMILY OF DARKNESS TO A FAMILY OF LIGHT

KAPINI

I don't know just when I was born for I was born into a family of darkness. Shortly after my birth my father was taken away to a distant place to work on a rubber plantation. He returned when I was about four years old and died shortly afterwards. I don't remember his face, but I can remember that he wore a red cloth. My mother raised me.

First the Catholics and then the Protestants sent a teacher to our village, but I refused to go to school. Finally a cousin asked me, "Don't you ever want to learn to read books?" "Books, what are they?" "Come and see." And so I began school. Even after I went to the station I was mostly interested in books, and I learned all I could. Because they asked me to, I joined the class of 'followers,' but I hadn't accepted Christ as my Saviour. I worked in missionaries' homes, and on the school work gang, and it seemed people were always bothering me, reporting me so that I had to work punishments. I was very unhappy but I kept on at school because I still wanted to learn. I had never been saved though. One day, when my friend and I were sure we were going to starve if we didn't get some fish to eat, we ran away from school, 'borrowed' a canoe, and went fishing. On the way back, at a place where the water was very swift an animal jumped into the canoe from a tree on the bank. Both of us were very frightened and jumped out of the canoe. I landed with one foot in the canoe, one in the water and my hands grasping a vine from the bank. I finally got ashore and we managed to get the canoe again and arrive safely. But I began to think about my life. I realiz ed the wrong I was doing. I spoke to my teacher and asked him how I could learn to change my habits. He told me to pray daily in secret for strength. From that time on I began to listen to God's voice. I truly repented and put my faith in Him. In 1930 I was baptized.

That year too I began to teach, and then four years later I went to Kimpese. I took the normal course, and after my return

in 1937 I began to teach in the Vanga Central School. I am still teaching there. I was married in 1937 and now have a family of four children.

Shortly after my return from Kimpese I heard that a young woman from my village had died, and that they accused my uncle of being the witch and 'eating' her strength. They were going to give the poison cup to him and bury him alive. I asked for permission to go to try to stop these evil ways, and hurried to the village. The children were afraid to talk to me, all the elders ran away from me because they were afraid. They tried to make my relatives prevent me from doing anything. I noticed that many people were coming from a place in the woods, and when I went there I found my uncle almost dead. I tried to get some one to help me with him, but instead they came and took me away by force, and locked me in a hut. Later they told me that my uncle was buried alive, but no one would tell me where his grave was. I reported the matter to the state, but when it was investigated no one would witness with me. They all lied and said that my uncle had committed suicide and was buried. They had previously opened the grave and removed the bonds, then buried him again. Even my mother and other relatives joined the villagers in saying I was lying because they were afraid of what might happen to them if they told the truth. I was the only witness so nothing could be done.

Today I am very happy in the work the Lord has given me to do as a teacher for Him. I hope that someday I can go to a higher school to study agriculture for my people need a great deal of help in things like that. They need to be taught that Christianity must pervade their whole life, must help them to have better health, better gardens, better villages. And it is only as they practice Christianity in their everyday living that they will cast out the powers of darkness and superstition and walk Jesus' road of light.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

MAT. 1:21

CHRISTMAS IN CONGO FOR MISSIONARIES' CHILDREN

LINDA WATKINS

MOST missionaries' children have had a Christmas at home and been awed by the beauties of the lighted streets, the beautifully decorated shops and homes, and the carolling on Christmas eve and early morning. To many at home Christmas without snow is unknown; so coming to Congo where the hottest time of the year is around Christmas they find it a big contrast. Each family out here tries to keep Christmas as nearly like the homeland as possible.

* * * * *

"Mama when will it be Christmas?" "Tomorrow dear" "But mama there are no pretty lights on the roads, there are no pretty trees lit up and there are no decorations in the stores." "Dear, you are in the Congo and we don't have all those things out here". "But mama are there no pretty Christmas carols?" "Listen dear . . . . . .

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all gracious King.
The earth in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

The native school children had come to sing their carols. We all rushed out to listen and to greet them. As their voices died away in the distance we heard . . . . .

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled!

"Mama did the angels sing prettier than that when Jesus was born?"

It is Christmas eve in Congo, and the tree is ready, sleepy children are tucked in bed waiting the new day — Christmas.

What excitement—what joy—the stockings are full — packages from loved ones at home have been hidden until now—things saved for two and three years have been wrapped and put under the tree. All hearts old and young are filled with gratitude. No one has been forgotten, house boys, workmen, all have their packages, school children have had their gifts at school. Yes, the missionaries' children are happy. The things in the homeland that we consider indispensable are forgotten as the Christmas joy of children is realized in each home.

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isa. 9:6

CONVERTS TO CHRIST IN OUR REGIONAL SCHOOLS

C. J. Jump

SUANI is a pupil in the regional school at Kimputu. A lad of about fifteen years, he comes from the large Bayanzi village of Musiele, hidden in the hills near our Ngunu Church Post. There would be little to distinguish him from the other boys of his village, if it were not for the fact that he now is a baptized Christian, one more in the group of those who are being won to Christ through the medium of our schools.

While the evangelistic efforts among the school boys and girls obviously can be more intensive in the central station schools, where the students are maturer and more prone to stand the call made upon them by Christ, and where the missionaries also can give more adequate personal supervision, this does not preclude a program of evangelism in the district regional schools. Each year among those baptized at Vanga and the other Baptist stations in the Congo are students from the many regional schools. At the same time, others of their classmates have been led to profess Christ and begin a period of training preparatory to baptism.

The students at Kimputu, like those at all the regional schools, come from a variety of villages, covering an area roughly comparable to a county in the States. Some of the students, like Suani, have their homes in what may be termed Christian villages, where a good proportion of the inhabitants are professed Christians, while others come from villages where only a few, or perhaps none, are Christian. Some have had wholesome Christian influence in their homes, one or both of their parents being members of the local church. Others have been reared in a heathen atmosphere, with their relatives indifferent or openly hostile to the things of the spirit. However, practically all have had some contact with the Christian message in the village schools, where they have received the first rudiments of an education.

Upon their arrival at the regional school, they are given to

understand that it is a Christian school where the ordinary rules of morality and decency must be observed. As they begin their lessons, eager to advance mentally and keenly aware that the teachers, trained in the mission school, have much to give them, they generally are receptive to the spiritual teaching as well.

At morning worship where the teachers and pastor take turns preaching, and in the daily Bible classes the students learn not only of the Old Testament heroes and their valiant deeds, but also of the One who came to save His people from the bondage of their sin. While paper shortages in the world outside restrict the available supply of Bibles, and only a privileged few can obtain one of these. Kikongo New Testaments are fairly plentiful, and most of the students soon are possessors of a copy of the good news of love and redemption, and in their spare moments a great many read and reread from this one book which they own.

As light breaks in their hearts, questions arise and are asked and answered in the classes in Bible and catechism. Sometimes the question is referred to the maturer and better trained post pastor, who generally is available for consulation and advice, and whose task it is to bring the inquirer to a fuller understanding of the Christian faith which he seeks. When the student has satisfied the pastor and the local deacons as to his sound grasp of the fundamentals of the faith, both through testimony and the witness of his life, he is presented to the missionary for examination, along with the other "followers" from his post. If after a talk of fifteen or twenty minutes with the candidate, the missionary is satisfied that the student has given evidence of a Christian experience and faith, he is passed for baptism and admitted to the Christian fellowship.

For most of the new converts, admission to the Christian fellowship is not the end, but the beginning of their walk with Christ. Especially, is this so among the school boys. For as soon as they finish their schooling, a good many of them are enlisted to take their place in the ranks of Christian workers, and entrusted with the task of teaching others what they have learned and experienced about God and the gift of His Son to be the Saviour of men.

WHY DIDN'T YOU GIVE THE INVITATION?

T.E. Bubeck

WE had just come from the church center at Kifunga where we had a gathering where we had examined nearly five hundred candidates for baptism of which number we accepted and baptised 194. Following the service at a small stream in the woods we met in the largest of all our churches in the district for the morning service.

The church had been built to hold 400 but was stormed that morning by more than twice that number who for the moment forgot all about the cultivation of Christian culture, or the "permeation of their culture by Christian ideals." For myself I was not a little provoked at such savagery in connection with the house of God, but upon reflection I am certain I should prefer a mud church filled with barbarians to an empty cathedral. I'll put up with the cruel mutilation of Christian hymns, the bizarre methods of unpolished pastors if there exists genuine enthusiasm and interest. There was no question that morning about the presence of either.

One of the pastors had somehow gotten hold of a basketball whistle which he produced at a moment during the communion service when some were whispering. For a moment I was shocked out of my senses. For a brief moment I lost complete sense of where I was and felt myself in the gallery at a basketball game and came very near shouting for the winning team. I am glad that I did not carry out my impulse for it would have added to the disorder of the moment. But with it all God's Spirit was present in a remarkable way.

We had come, I started out to say, from this church gathering which had lasted a whole week, and on our way to the next church center we stopped at one of the villages for a brief church service. It has not been my habit to conclude every message with an invitation, but since returning to the field two tears ago I have made it a practice to conclude almost every message given out in the district with an invitation to accept the Lord Jesus Christ

and to make public confession of that new relationship. On this occasion, however, we had left the car at the road about half a mile from the village. It was already beginning to rain and bright flashes of lightning were followed by piercing peals of thunder. Add to this the fact that just a day or two previous I had gotten caught in just such a storm without an umbrella and you will understand that I concluded the message that morning with just one thought —how to get back to the car without a drenching. We said a hasty goodbye, and were off followed by a dozen or so of young people. As together we ran they said, "Tata, why didn't you give the invitation this morning? We had agreed to accept Christ and make public confession of our acceptance this morning should you conclude your message with an invitation as you have been accustomed to doing."

You know, of course, exactly how I felt. I doubt if I have ever felt more reproved. I was humiliated, but I learned a lesson which I question whether I shall ever forget. It was not that every message must conclude with an invitation, but that I must never let my plan or comfort interfere with the work of the Spirit of God. I shall try never again to consider anything more important than the salvation of a soul for whom Christ died. Finally, I shall try to guard against giving the impression that a definite decision for Christ is not necessary. To the contrary I shall try to lead those who "believe in their heart" also to "confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus." And I shall try to live in such intimacy with the "Lord of the harvest" that if He is leading any to make public confession of their faith in Him that I shall be ready and unhurried so that one need never again turn away and say, "Why didn't you give the invitation?"

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

LUKE 2:7

CONGO GIRLS GO TO CAMP

RUTH DICKEY

THIS dry season over a thousand girls have attended camps in our Vanga field. In forty-eight days we held nine camps. Barefooted little brown girls from 6-17 years old attended the camps.

Place. The camps were held at our church centers, little Christian villages built out of the forest or on a high hill. There a native pastor lives and a Regional School is carried on during the school year. We take advantage of the dry season vacation and hold our camps there so we can use the thatched dormitories for the girls.

Equipment. Not much equipment is needed. A sleeping mat, a cooking pot and if one is fortunate enough to own an extra cloth, that is tucked in. That diminuates the problem of laundry for while she bathes her cloth dries in the sun. There is also the string of beads and the smile which most African girls have. No dishes or silver needed for they sit around the cooking pot and eat with their fingers. No table linen to wash and best of all no dishes to wash. The primitive African is not cluttered with material things.

Food. Three hours are given to the girls at noon so that they can supplement their food supply in the rich African jungle. There are juicy caterpillars that make delicious stew, field rats which roasted to a golden brown are something special. There are roots, leaves, berries and the beautiful orange palm nuts which are so rich in fat and vitamins. Wild pineapples and a few roasted peanuts serve for dessert. They eat only two meals a day and if there is no food they just tie up their hearts and say nothing.

Recreation. Bathing in the cool-stream and hunting in the forest. Late in the afternoon is play hour when we teach them new games.

Worship. Our whole program is built around worship. The campfire services each night, the silvery moonlight with the southern

cross looking down on. The camp fire playing on the brown faces of the girls. How they love to sing and one of their favorite choruses is "Heavenly Sunshine" which I translated into Kikongo. There are also classes in Bible memory work, those who successfully finish the verses are rewarded with a Bible picture. There are hygiene lessons and stories of great Bible women. Very few of these hundreds of girls are followers of Christ but during the camps many become Christians. At one camp 54 girls accepted Christ as Lord. There is always a decision day when we talk with the girls about giving their hearts and lives to the Great Chief God. As they are very religious people they respond to the Gospel. However, many are not able to stand out against the forces of heathenism when they go back to their villages. The first night of camp I took a burning ember from the fire and we lifted our hearts in prayer that God would light a fire in the hearts of each of us. Our Lord said: "I am the light of the world." "Ye are the light of the world."

Work. African girls know the meaning of work for they are the burden bearers. They are fortunate if their mothers will let them off a few days for camp. They must keep the post clean, carry wood and water for the missionary and pastor. These little wild women of the forest are not used to sitting still very long, they soon get restless and after the last class they are off to the cool stream with a shout. There they talk over things of the morning and make new friendships with girls of other tribes.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

LUKE 2: 13-14

THE PEOPLE WHO COME TO OUR DOOR

C. AND M. JUMP

PERHAPS one of the best ways to tell you what we have been doing recently would be to introduce you to some of the people who come to our door. It seems that the minute we settle down to work—accounts, lessons, letters, sermons, etc.—there is a knock at the door, or even more frequently just the sound of someone clearing his throat. We call out "*Nani*?" (Who is it?), and invariably receive the answer "*Mono*" (I). Then on the way to the door we ask "*Mono i nani*? (Who is I?) and we open the door to find:

Bueba, the printer, with some Old Testament lessons to be proofread, or with a request for oil for the printing press, or a rag to clean the machine, or sometimes for more work.

Mumeme, the school office boy, who has come to get the stencils that we want mimeographed, paper for examinations, or slate pencils.

Mununguu, a teacher who has come to ask for help with the lesson on ferns, or some French grammar, or perhaps a new hymn that he is teaching in music class.

Kapini, the principal of the school, who brings us word that he has found a big rooster that is for sale and would be just the one we need for the new school poultry yard. "Can we buy it?"

The women from a near-by village who have brought manioc to the school market and want their production cards signed.

A school boy who wants permission to visit sick relatives over the week-end, or one who wants to check his last grade in French.

A youngster who has two eggs to sell for safety pins, or fish hooks, or needles, or even newspaper pictures.

A village man who owns the goat that was caught in the garden. He has come to pay his fine of five francs per goat, and since his goat had triplets while in captivity, it costs him twenty francs instead of only five.

A messenger from one of the church posts. Each month they

come from the posts bringing the account books which must be checked and returned in time for the first Sunday of the month. Along with the books are letters asking for school supplies, books, Bibles, slates, whistles, or notebooks. We have hundreds of requests for Kikongo Bibles and are unable to buy them as they are out of print. They all plead for Kikongo Bibles, and it is heartbreaking to think of all the unnecessary books and papers that are printed even though Bibles, the Word of Life, cannot be done because of the paper shortage.

There is almost always some money to be counted, either to be put into the bank until enough is saved for a brick church, or money to pay for supplies that have been bought, or money which is sent in each month for our own missionary projects.

Women from the villages. They have heard that at Vanga they have a new way to teach people to read. When can they come to learn? And so three days a week some of the school boys have classes for these women, teaching them how to read by Dr. Laubach's new method, and then speaking to them of Jesus Christ and his love.

The mail boy—with mail from home and freight invoices that show us a "white cross" box of school supplies has arrived, or perhaps a Christmas package, or the sack of sugar we ordered months ago. Need we tell you that he is one of the most welcome folks at our door? In fact we are not stating it correctly for we very seldom wait for him to came to the door. At the first sound of the mail boat whistle we are outside waiting for him.

A messenger from the government official with word that he will be in to the station in a day or two to collect taxes, or to examine the schools. That means we hastily check over the grounds, make sure that everything is clean and well swept, bake some cookies for tea, and begin practising our French.

Occasional other white visitors—missionaries en route from Léopoldville to their stations. The main road from Léopoldville into the region of the Kasai river passes within a few miles of Vanga, and frequently we have over-night guests. It is always a pleasure to welcome these folks and to talk shop with them. We

share ideas and experiences and worship together. Not very long ago two Swedish boy scout leaders who are walking around the world spent the evening here.

The people who come to our door—they are many andvaried. While Jesus preached to the multitudes he also worked with individuals. And so we like to feel that we have a chance to minister to each one who comes to us. If the village man who must pay a fine because his goat was in the garden can see something of Jesus in us when he comes to the door, or if the women who come to learn to read can take home with them a little bit of Jesus, or if the messengers from the villages can know that their missionaries are people who have been with Jesus, surely we are making a real contribution to their lives. Pray that the people who come to our door may go away satisfied not only because we have been able to grant the things they ask, but because they have seen Jesus too.

There is no limit to God's love,
Nor measure to His grace;
Omnipotent He reigns above,
And none His ways can trace.

At Bethlehem with grace arrayed
God manifest we see;
At Calvary His love displayed
To sinners — so to me.

His love so vast, His grace so free,
Poured out without reserve,
Have made a willing slave of me,
To worship and to serve.

W.R. Moore

NEWS ITEMS

LEOPOLDVILLE —Another opportunity to preach the Word and witness for our Lord has been given us. We go each Thursday afternoon to hold a service in the Police Camp for Léo West.

A Service of God Speed was held Sunday morning August 15, for Nzanzadi and his wife and two small daughters, who left for Kimpese to enter school. After letters of transfer were given, an appeal was made for those whose membership was back home, to stand and thus signifying their desires to be transferred. None stood, but after the service four people spoke to the pastor stating their desire to unite with the church here.

A Silver Wedding Anniversary was observed for our pastor Lubikulu John and his wife Selipa. They were married while Lubikulu was a student at Kimpese on August 15, 1923. In the morning service, time was given for the recognition of this couple who have faithfully served the Master through the years. They and six of their living children stood before the congregation, while appropriate scripture was read and a prayer of consecration was made.

The Book of Romans is to be studied in a series of meetings, and Pre-Easter Evangelistic meetings will be held as well as the *Home Visitation Evangelism program*, as part of the program for the church during the coming months.

The Dispensary was opened for the school children in July. Mattie Marie a graduate of the medical school at Sona Bata is serving as nurse. In the fall we hope to be able to have medicines and needed equipment for treating the church people.

A Medal for services during the war years was awarded to Lubikulu John by the Congo government, on July 21.

KIKONGO — We are still waiting for permission to actually occupy the new Bayaka site. The land has been surveyed and the government official has made an agreement with the local chiefs to release the land with rights to the stream and thirteen-foot falls, the hunting and fishing rights, for a comparatively small sum of money. We plan to spend three weeks at the chosen site holding a school for prospective evangelists, for young men who have had some schooling and desire to serve the Lord. In three weeks' intensive work we hope to bring them close enough to the Lord to be able to win others to Him. It is an emergency measure. We cannot wait for better trained men. We shall try to give them more training later, but we must occupy these villages while we can. It will be dry season so we and they can get along with tent and temporary shelters.

OTHER ITEMS — Miss Alice Jorgenson has arrived in Congo after a year's furlough. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong have left New York and are expected here about October fifteenth. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Brown will be coming to Congo soon. It is always good news to hear of the arrival of more forces to help with the work.

Three stations have received long-waited-for vehicles which are a boon to the work in each place. Miss Emily Satterberg now has her Jeep Station Wagon, to help out with the itinerating at Sona Bata. Banza Manteke has a new one ton truck, which enables the missionaries to go itinerating frequently and with less difficulty than walking. Kimpese now has a Jeep Station Wagon, which already has been of much use to various members of the staff.

'Twas the week before Christmas and all over *VANGA* station folks were hurrying back and forth trying to borrow dishpans, wash tubs, buckets, to use as cooking utensils. It was the day of the Christmas Feast. A committee of boys was setting up tables and benches under the trees, 'planting' palm branches and tying flowers on them to form a dining room wall. The girls were pounding manioc and cooking it,

boiling greens and squash seeds. Another group of boys was cooking the meat in palm oil, roasting peanuts, gathering pineapples and bananas. The teachers were serving as official tasters. The missionaries were making peanut brittle and searching for gifts for the native chiefs who had also been invited. And then everything was ready, and the three hundred students gathered around the table. There was a lot of singing then a moment of silence, then "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and then we began serving.

IN EXCELSIS GLORIA

When Christ was born of Mary free,
In Bethle'm in that fair city,
Angels sung e'er with mirth and glee,
In Excelsis gloria.

Herdmen beheld these angels bright-
To them appeared with great light,
And said, 'God's son is born this night':
In Excelsis gloria.

This king is come to save his kind,
In the scripture as we find;
Therefore this song have we in mind;
In Excelsis gloria.

Then, dear Lord, for thy great grace,
Grant us the bliss to see thy face,
Where we may sing to thy solace;
In Excelsis gloria.

—English Fifteenth Century Carol - 1456

THE KINGS

Three Kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the new born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;
Gold, incense, myrhh are their offering.

The star shines out with a steadfast ray;
The Kings to Bethlehem make their way
And there in worship they bend the knee,
As Mary's child in her lap they see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King,
Gold, incense, myrhh are their offering.

Thou child of man — lo, to Bethlehem
The Kings are travelling — travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
Shall lead thy heart to its resting-place.
Gold, incense, myrhh thou canst not bring;
Offer thy heart to the infant King,
Offer thy heart!

P. CORNELIUS, 19TH CENTURY CAROL

Belgian Congo Mission

BELGIAN CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY
with P. O. addresses*

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Miss Annis Ford
Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas
Miss Vera Murdock, R.N.

KIKONGO sur Wamba
via Banningville
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** Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpese*